

TRANSCRIPT OF A RECORDING OF A TELEPHONE
CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND H.R.
HALDEMAN ON JUNE 4, 1973, FROM 10:05 TO
10:20 P.M.

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TELEPHONE

OPERATOR: Yes, please.

PRESIDENT: Mr. Haldeman, please.

OPERATOR: Thank you. Mr. Haldeman.

PRESIDENT: Hello. Have you got a minute?

HALDEMAN: Sure.

PRESIDENT: I thought you should know that starting at, uh, 9:30 this morning, I have been working until just now. I listened to every tape.

HALDEMAN: Good Lord!

PRESIDENT: You know, the thing that you did and boy I know the agony that you went through. I put the ear phones on, you see.

HALDEMAN: Did ya? That's the way to do it.

PRESIDENT: And I listened to every damn thing, and Bob, this son of a bitch is bluffing.

HALDEMAN: Well sure.

PRESIDENT: Also, we sent Buzhardt over, this -and this, is just for your private information...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: He went through the files and not a God damn mem con of the files.

HALDEMAN: Really?

PRESIDENT: None. Period. He didn't make any.

JUNE 4, 1973 FROM 10:05 TO 10:20 P.M.

2

HALDEMAN: I didn't see how there could be any that would, would matter 'cause you do not have anything unless he made 'um up.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, he could make mem con's of conversations, you see, but he didn't have those either.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Unless he took them out.

HALDEMAN: I'll be darned.

PRESIDENT: And we don't think so. The other thing is that throughout this thing you should be interested to note, he doesn't mention the 350 until the twenty-first--

HALDEMAN: I didn't think so.

PRESIDENT: And he didn't mention, Ehr, Ehrlichman's uh, deal, with the, uh, Kalmbach 'til the twenty-first.

HALDEMAN: I didn't think so. I thought...

PRESIDENT: And also...

HALDEMAN: ...that came through on the twenty-first. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: And also, -that was new -and also, he did mention the, the, the Krogh thing on about the seventeenth.

HALDEMAN: Oh, really.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, but that's alright. You know he mentioned that, uh,...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

JUNE 4, 1973 FROM 10:05 TO 10:20 P.M.

3

PRESIDENT: ...that uh, uh, that was there and so forth, but only in passing as if it weren't a big thing or so forth.

HALDEMAN: Well, he must of mentioned that, uh, at some earlier point the, uh, the doctor's office break-in.

PRESIDENT: That's what I mean.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. Because it, it became sort of apparent in the, in the, at the later point that he hadn't mentioned that earlier.

PRESIDENT: Yeah. But that's it. I thought you should also know that...

HALDEMAN: Boy, that's great.

PRESIDENT: ...he said throughout this conversation that "nobody in the White House is involved." He said that, uh...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ..."Ehrlichman isn't, Haldeman isn't," you know he kept, he said that on at least four occasions in this thing.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I hit him straight on, you know at that point.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: He said, "Nope, they're not."

HALDEMAN: Well that's what he...

PRESIDENT: The only,...

HALDEMAN: ...told me all along

JUNE 4, 1973 FROM 10:05 TO 10:20 P.M.

4

PRESIDENT: The only thing that he has in there, which he did hit about the seventeenth, or maybe the fourteenth, was that Strachan might be, uh,...

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...involved in terms of getting material.

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: Only that.

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: But you know, what the hell was that, uh, uh, what the hell to make out of that. I didn't know what, uh, uh, th-that was true or not.

HALDEMAN: And that was a might. And, and, there's there's still doubt about that.

PRESIDENT: um hmm.

HALDEMAN: Well there still is.

PRESIDENT: That's only, that's only his -uh, he didn't indicate that Strachan knew about it in, in advance.

HALDEMAN: Right.

PRESIDENT: He only indicated that he had some, as he put it, the fruits of the investigation.

HALDEMAN: Well, there's a question about that.

PRESIDENT: But, but and be that as it may, I want you to be sure to tell John.

HALDEMAN: Well, that's, that's gre...

PRESIDENT: Both you and he, he just through out until the twenty-first, didn't say one damn word that,

PRESIDENT: uh, indicated that, uh, either of--he
(CONTINUED) mentioned that Ehrlichman's involved with something about the Chappaquiddick thing. And I, and there's nothing wrong with that.

HALDEMAN: Huh.

PRESIDENT: You know the Chappaquiddick thing.

HALDEMAN: Well, that was with that Tony or something, huh?

PRESIDENT: Huh?

HALDEMAN: With that guy Tony?

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: And, uh, so what the hell is that, that we -that an investigation was conducted. He says that's uh, problem for Ehrlichman, he said. That's a problem.

HALDEMAN: Those are all, what he's talking about there, are, are, uh...

PRESIDENT: Have nothing with Watergate.

HALDEMAN: Political embarrassment or, public embarrassment, but not problems of any legal...

PRESIDENT: Nope, nope.

HALDEMAN: ...culpability.

PRESIDENT: But, I thought you'd be interested, pleased to know, that I, I went through this agony for eight hours, nine hours today. I did nothing else. Just damn near broke me down. But, you know how tough it is to listen to that stuff.

JUNE 4, 1973 FROM 10:05 TO 10:20 P.M.

6

HALDEMAN: Oh, it is, it's, it's, uh nerve-racking and, then, of course, I was trying to make notes, which, and you probably were too.

PRESIDENT: I made notes all way through.

HALDEMAN: It makes it even worse.

PRESIDENT: The only thing I missed, that I, uh, hope you will do, I did not make, I did not pick the twenty-first conversation because I figured you ought to be the witness on that.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: I did not, uh, make notes on the twenty second conversation, figuring that you, Ehrlichman and, were there, you know,

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...and that you would make notes on that.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: So, you'll have to cover that if you will, and, and give us, give me, a little -you know, just for my own information, what the hell he said on those occasions. Twen you got it? On, on the, uh, on the twenty second. And the telephone calls from Key Biscayne I don't have because they don't have those recorded. I called him twice from Key Biscayne and, uh,

HALDEMAN: Yeah. But, that...

PRESIDENT: But I think it was about McCord, but I don't know.

JUNE 4, 1973 FROM 10:05 TO 10:20 P.M.

7

HALDEMAN: I think, I think it probably was because, uh, uh, or it could have been on a lot of other, que, sort of question things. But they were all on, they weren't on this subject at all.

PRESIDENT: It could have been about Bittman. You know, I could have mentioned that to him.

HALDEMAN: That's possible, yeah.

PRESIDENT: And uh, but, suppose we did. You know, I said, "Well, listen, I understand Bittman's taking care of" or something, that's, that's a question of evidence. Right?

HALDEMAN: Yeah, but that isn't likely. I can't imagine that, that you would of...

PRESIDENT: I might of, no, no I might have mentioned that because I was concerned about it you know. About whether, uh, Bittman had, uh,

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...was gonna blow -not because of Watergate, because he was going to blow on, uh,

HALDEMAN: ...on the other project.

PRESIDENT: Yes, that's right. But, uh, except for those two conversations from Key Biscayne on the twenty-third, I've got it all now, and there ain't nothing there, believe me.

HALDEMAN: Well...

PRESIDENT: As far as,-basically, if you'd be interested to know, on the twenty-seventh, the twenty eighth, uh, which I have the first and, uh, all the other conversations we had, Bob, they were about, every, usually, about Executive Privilege, Gray...

JUNE 4, 1973 FROM 10:05 TO 10:20 P.M.

8

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: ...getting the F, getting Sullivan to get us some dope on the, uh, bugging.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Uh, things of that sort.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: But, there's not a God damn -he didn't, didn't ever mention the cover-up. Never.

HALDEMAN: Well, I didn't think so, and, and, on the basis of the, of the twenty-first, ya, you have to assume that he hadn't because, uh, as I told you, it was so clear that this was new stuff.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: That, uh, I didn't see how he could have mentioned it earlier.

PRESIDENT: I'm going to have Moore make memos with regard to, what he talked to him about on the twentieth, I don't know what the hell he did talk to him about, but, I had a conversation with him on the twentieth that had nothing to do with all this.

HALDEMAN: Did you listen to those too?

PRESIDENT: Hell yes.

HALDEMAN: Good lord.

JUNE 4, 1973 FROM 10:05 TO 10:20 P.M.

9

PRESIDENT: I mentioned it so -I listened to every thing there was, that we had available. But, but, the stuff the EOB doesn't come through. So I haven't got that pretty well (unintelligible).

HALDEMAN: Oh, really.

PRESIDENT: No.

HALDEMAN: It doesn't, doesn't...

PRESIDENT: No

HALDEMAN: ...pick up.

PRESIDENT: It's not clear. But, nevertheless, the point is that those conversations are always ones where you or John are both, were present, see.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: So you're the witnesses on that.

HALDEMAN: Well, there were only a couple of them.

PRESIDENT: Yeah, well, the Mitchell one and another one, apparently there was one -I didn't realize this, on the afternoon of the twenty-first. Uh, did you

HALDEMAN: That's right.

PRESIDENT: What the hell was that all about?

HALDEMAN: At 5:30, that was the one afterwards that he said, uh, bring, pull the wagons up around the White House.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: It was uh, uh,...

JUNE 4, 1973 FROM 10:05 TO 10:20 P.M.

10

PRESIDENT: Did he mention all this Bittman stuff?
HALDEMAN: No, uh-uh.
PRESIDENT: Hum.
HALDEMAN: Not at all. Not at all.
PRESIDENT: Shows ya, maybe whe--, the Bittman thing is something that concerns us more than him.
HALDEMAN: Yep.
PRESIDENT: Hum. But the point is that this whole jazz, to the effect that, or, -from January throughout we a thirty-five meetings and telephone calls in which it, we discussed the cover-up Bob, is totally false.
HALDEMAN: Well, that's, I know that.
PRESIDENT: Totally false.
HALDEMAN: And I was sure of that from going through the log yesterday.
PRESIDENT: And I wasn't sure, you know, until I hear it.
HALDEMAN: Even. And then it just, it, it, it's awfully good that you did. Alright what're you gonna do with that now, other than know it.
PRESIDENT: Well.
HALDEMAN: Can't do anything.
PRESIDENT: I can't do a thing except...
HALDEMAN: ...except that you (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: ...reassure our own people and to know that, uh, we know what the hell the facts are.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: And we're going to let him go out his string a little further now. You what I mean.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, right.

PRESIDENT: Let's see what he does, I, I, don't you agree? Or do you?

HALDEMAN: Sure, sure, 'Cause that, see that, that just discredits him all the more.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: And you get that story out of the thirty five meetings to, uh, on the cover-up, uh, that is just clearly not true. And, and if it's...

PRESIDENT: The only possibility is that he...

HALDEMAN: ...you can prove it.

PRESIDENT: He might have a telephone call from Key Biscayne on the twenty-third. That's the only thing I can figure.

HALDEMAN: That, that's after the investigation and, and...

PRESIDENT: Um hum.

HALDEMAN: ...when you're into it, you're about to pull him off of it or you know, you've got him going on. I can...

PRESIDENT: But you were talking to him then. Weren't you, Bob?

HALDEMAN: Darn right.

PRESIDENT: What the hell was he talking about on the twenty-third?

HALDEMAN: I've got a lot of details on, on that.

PRESIDENT: What'd he talk about?

HALDEMAN: Oh, all kinds of stuff. The McCord, uh, the McCord thing, and, and his, you know, just trying to sort it all out.

PRESIDENT: Did he go into the Bittman thing with you on those, on that occasion?

HALDEMAN: No. Uh-uh. No, it never came up again.

PRESIDENT: Hum.

HALDEMAN: Except, you know, as a later, he referred to it as, as one of the examples of, of, uh, blackmail. That was on the twenty-sixth. He gave me a long spell out on the twenty sixth of a lot of his theories on things, which was after held been up there for a while and it was clear then...

PRESIDENT: (Clears throat) If you could give me, uh, for my own private information, just your own -and uh, just send it to me, you know "eyes only," -of your recollections of the twenty-second, uh, and the afternoon of the twenty-first, it would be helpful.

HALDEMAN: Alright. There isn't very much, but I can.

PRESIDENT: Huh?

HALDEMAN: Uh, there's not much. I can't...

PRESIDENT: Uh, just, just your recollection of what the hell it was.

HALDEMAN: Ok.

PRESIDENT: Anything that's really relevant to all this thing.

HALDEMAN: Ok.

PRESIDENT: But, you and John should be uh, pleased to know that there wasn't any God -there wasn't a damn thing -except for the Strachan thing. He mentioned that. He did mention that on the thirteenth or fourteenth.

HALDEMAN: Hum.

PRESIDENT: About Strachan, he said, uh, was, uh, you know, "possibly vulnerable," as he put it.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: And that, that might make you possibly vuln-, and I said "John, does that mean Haldeman knows." He said, "No." You know.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Flat out.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: In fact, through the twenty-first, he said you were not, you and John were not involved except in this tangential way, you know, John on this basis. As a matter of fact, the whole thing is, uh, one that shows that the fellow was not, uh, if anything, leveling with us about what the hell...

HALDEMAN: That's a point.

PRESIDENT: I mean, I, uh, -except he's let's -that he did mention the, uh, the break in -on the seventeenth. He mentioned that. But that's when I first heard of it and I jumped out the chair virtually, said, "What the hell is that all about." That's the first time I heard about the break-in, you know.

HALDEMAN: Whadda, you mean, uh, uh the doc, the psychiatrist.

PRESIDENT: Yes.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: But, that's alright. We covered that in our statement. I didn't say twenty-first. I said in March I learned about it, see.

HALDEMAN: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Ok.

HALDEMAN: Well, that's very interesting. I see your friend Cox is all excited now that he's...

PRESIDENT: What, what's he saying now?

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: I heard that he's take, takin' on Ervin.

HALDEMAN: Well, he took on Ervin, on the, uh, -uh, he had a press conference and called on Ervin to hold up for ninety days.

PRESIDENT: Um hum.

HALDEMAN: And Ervin and all the other Senators told him to go to hell.

PRESIDENT: Um hmm.

HALDEMAN: But, uh, uh, they also, apparently the, the White House was asked if, if you had a log that showed whether you had these meetings with Dean and uh, uh, they said that, that would not be put out. You know that, that's...

PRESIDENT: Well.

HALDEMAN: ...President's papers or something. And the, uh, Cox leaked out and said that, uh, he would of course get those papers. Held been promised access to all papers and, uh, that he would expect to have access to all papers and there would be no, no, uh...

PRESIDENT: Uh, we've got to stand firm on that, don't you think?

HALDEMAN: So, uh, -I think so except, uh,...

PRESIDENT: We could put the log out.

HALDEMAN: Yeah, I'm not sure you'd, you, you have to -well, I don't know though.

PRESIDENT: I don't want to put these pap, I don't want to put the papers out though, basically because there's, you know, there's some very frank talk in there about what I think of the Supreme Court and a hell of a lot of other things. I don't want it out.

HALDEMAN: Oh, yeah. You can't do that.

PRESIDENT: What would you do?

HALDEMAN: Well, it seems to me that -well of course they did, uh, see, -they say they won't release the log. I don't think you do want to release your log, because that releases your, your private meetings and all that. I think what, what they've done is right, which is they said, they confirmed that you had met with Dean a, a...

PRESIDENT: Um hum.

HALDEMAN: ...a number of times during the,...

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: ...this period. Uh, let's see, one of the things Dean makes the point is you know that, the meeting started January first...

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible)...

HALDEMAN: which is significant that they didn't start till February 27th.

PRESIDENT: Um hum.

HALDEMAN: And uh, uh...

PRESIDENT: Might put that out, huh?

HALDEMAN: I just wonder if maybe it shouldn't be better characterized that there were a series of meetings, uh, uh, starting on the twenty-seventh, regarding Executive Privilege and, and uh,...

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: ...uh, the, the questions of dealing with the Senate hearings and (unintelligible)...

PRESIDENT: And no cover-up was ever discussed.

HALDEMAN: ...relating to your press conferences. And there was absolutely no discussion of cover-up.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

HALDEMAN: At any time.

PRESIDENT: Right.

HALDEMAN: Uh, in any of those until--I think you could say until the meeting of the twenty-first because you said in your, your, uh...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...first speech that on the twenty-first you received new information.

PRESIDENT: I wondered if you would mind giving Ron a call and telling him that. Would you mind doing that?

HALDEMAN: Ok.

PRESIDENT: Fine, fine. But I, boy, if I never had a harder day in my life, you know, I've uh,

HALDEMAN: (Laughs)

PRESIDENT: You could do it, a younger guy -but I, I can see how that you went through the agony on that twenty-first thing. Jesus, listening to this crap is unbelievably tough. But it was worth it. And as I said, Buzhardt spent the whole day in his files, just for your information. Didn't find one single damn mem com.

HALDEMAN: Hum.

PRESIDENT: Unless he's taken them out.

HALDEMAN: Well, he may have...

PRESIDENT: And Buzhar-no Buzhardt thinks he doesn't, he doesn't think he made any because he checked other things that he's worked on. He has no mem coms on that.

HALDEMAN: Yeah. Well, I didn't think he did.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: Told ya, he says he made a chronology at the end of each day.

PRESIDENT: Ah...

HALDEMAN: But, I think that's a lot of BS, just like all the rest of that...

PRESIDENT: He didn't find it. I mean, they didn't find any chronology in there.

HALDEMAN: And if he did, there wouldn't be anything in it.

(NOISE)

PRESIDENT: I...

HALDEMAN: So, you know I, what difference does it make if he does, did. In fact that it, it, it disserves his purpose to say he did make one, because it would...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

HALDEMAN: ...disprove his point.

PRESIDENT: Some way or other I think his lawyer is the one that's, uh, moving...

HALDEMAN: (Unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: out here. I don't think Dean, strangely enough, is, uh,...

HALDEMAN: I think you're right.

PRESIDENT: I think his lawyer is out really sla-, I mean making flamboyant, uh, charges and so forth and they won't stand up.

JUNE 4, 1973 FROM 10:05 TO 10:20 P.M.

19

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: But let's let him get out a little limb, a
 little bit more.

HALDEMAN: Yep.

PRESIDENT: If you would call Ziegler on this other
 point and say we ought to get that out,
 would you?

HALDEMAN: Ok.

PRESIDENT: Thanks, Bob.

HALDEMAN: Yes sir.

REEL END